



i magazine

A very faint, light-colored watermark or background image of a classical building with four columns and a pediment is visible across the entire page.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from

Federally funded with LSTA funds through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners

i magazine

mount wachusett community college

spring 1994

i magazine is published by mount wachusett community college
gardner, ma 01440

copyright 1994 i magazine
all copyrights revert to authors

i magazine staff

co-editors: linda patient and susan phillips

associate editors:

chris brouillet
corinne collins
teresa diederich
nancy leger
susan mabel
david monette
anita murray
tonja joyce roberts
pamalar williamson

staff:

cover design:
steve smith

faculty advisors:

doug anderson
arthur marley

contributors: students at the college are encouraged to submit stories, poems, essays and playscripts. all mss to **i magazine** should be sent c/o division of humanities, mount wachusett community college, gardner, ma. 01440 or to doug anderson or arthur marley, rooms 295 or 366, respectively.

contents

my father	steve smith	1
submerged.....	mary c velarde	2
migraine.....	bradley m hale	2
helping hands.....	marianne zephir	3
poem.....	teresa m diederich	4
poem.....	sheryl moretto thibault	4
potential moles.....	angela madeiras	5
poem.....	anonymous	6
grounds and gardens.....	susan phillips	6
the blue heron.....	mary c velarde	7
esther's song.....	r w anthony	8
poem.....	teresa m diederich	9
wild horses.....	susan mable	10
the rescue of lisa	tonya joyce roberts	11
untitled.....	margaret villani	15
after espada's words.....	steve smith	16
bad children are.....	daavid monette	17
poem.....	mary savage	18
poem.....	debra johnson	19
the tea party.....	r w anthony	19
grey dawn.....	tonya roberts	20
catharine i was, catharine i am	pamela d alton	21
have you heard.....	susan phillips	24
going home	gennavieve rachel veronica	25
white flight.....	r w anthony	26
poem.....	teresa m diederich	26
snapshot.....	susan phillips	27
from brief adventures of a dipsomaniac.....	angela madeiras	28
monody for an unknown.....	kevin teixeira	29
the older woman.....	anonymous	30
poem.....	sheryl moretto thibault	31
poem.....	mary savage	31
shadows and darkness.....	irene pervier	32
love	mary c velarde	32
more from brief adventures of a dipsomaniac.....	angela madeiras	33
for agnes	susan phillips	34
poem.....	margarat villani	35
poem.....	steve smith	35

poem.....	bradley m hale	36
wasted time	kim friberg	36
the mole	david st armand	39
poem.....	mary savage	41
words	carl tikka	41



My Father

What now must be words left unspoken.
Remember or perhaps slipping in from some corner,
You are there
Like dusty plum colored shadows, like breath.

You may have thought I recradled the receiver
Hanging up and turning to look away.
My same red tongue still licks the stamped letters,
Such a great pile of words for you.

In a series of blues and browns all the others
Were painted out until it was only you and I.
There, in Deb's house, in an olive green room
I dropped words into your ears.
Your swollen cheeks were like faded apricots.

I never read all those pages you showed me,
And yet I know each one--
Like the inside of my hand
Like the chocolate color of your eyes.
I want to make this simple,
A noguchi stone,
A kiss.

In that deep chair near your last blankets and sheets,
Remembering the wind turning in the oaks,
I didn't want that night to end,
I didn't want you to leave.

Steve Smith

SUBMERGED

Ah, my friend, for so many seasons, I have struggled, a novice swimmer, seeking to swim above the water. It was time to stop my ceaseless struggle. Softly I slipped into the smooth cerulean sea.

I did not sink but drifted languidly and luxuriously. The waters that I thought would pull me under lifted me, like the waves before the tide. I lofted handfuls of sparkling droplets of moonlit diamonds, liquid luminescent jewels of life. I swam in the sea, and others swam with me. I became one with the all. We are a cloud of quicksilver life. Shapeless, salient, like the sea we swim in, we are wafted along by the current of time and life and being. We are sand, sky, stars, and sea. The water is soft and silent and we swirl like sinuous silver, in the sibilant, silken sapphire sea.

Mary C. Velarde

Migraine

My eyes float as
my brain erupts
chills go down my spine

aspirin has no effect
the sharp ray of light penetrates my retina like a phaser hitting a clingon

death is more desirable than life

the schitomas start to fluctuate to my brain
then slight notes of music set off more eruptions in my head
my pain is yellow

darkness falls
tightness under my brows relieves my yellow pain

Bradley M. Hale

Helping Hand

Mary's neighbor came running toward her with a look of panic on her face that had never been there before. She was screaming something that became more coherent as she got closer. "Come, quick, I need help." Mary dropped the clothes that she had been hanging on the line and ran toward her friend.

"What's wrong Shirley?"

Shirley and her husband, Ed, had lived next door to Mary for the last ten years. She had never seen her friend in such a state before. Shirley was a quiet woman in her fifties who had little contact with people other than her husband Ed and her neighbor, Mary.

Shirley's face was as white as the sheet that Mary had just hung. When Mary reached her, she was out of breath and her voice sounded strange and shrill. "Hurry Mary, please hurry!"

The two women ran all the way to the house. As they entered the yard, Mary immediately noticed the wide-opened door. The next thing that she saw was something that looked like a severed hand, but it was moving. Mary closed her eyes, thinking that doing this would make what she was seeing disappear. When she opened them, the hand was still moving and it was coming toward them. Mary was about to scream when she realized that someone else was in the house, and whoever it was also was running toward them.

Ed came around the corner cursing, looking down and around, when Mary noticed that he was holding his arm and his right hand was gone. "Where is it, Shirley, I want that hand, damnit!"

"I told you, Ed, that hand is too fast! I got Mary here to help us catch it."

As Mary stood in shock, she looked down to see the bloody hand scurry by, and without thinking, She reached down to try and stop it. The hand was too fast. It ran by her and out the door.

Mary never heard so much cursing in her life as when Ed Pearson saw his hand get away. His voice and his cursing were the last things that she heard before everything went black and she hit the floor.

Marianne Zephir

Spinning
Toward the sky
I had the feeling
Of knowing you
And dreaming you
Were here
Drawing me
Into a whirl
Of joy
I hadn't known
Or sought
Until you and
Your weaving
Spun me
Into the winds
And
Freed me
Into
Elation
spinning.....

Teresa M. Diederich

I saw your shadow by the bedroom door
Watching me tie my work boots
Was it the way I raised my leg to the chair
That caught your eye
Your gaze was like a red hot laser
Penetrating through my side
Your eyes clearly showed wantonness
Come close, come closer still
Let me heed your essence
A whisper, I could have sworn I heard
With a slight turn to my left
I realized that the faint image
Was just a shadow of where you once stood
by the bedroom door

Sheryl Moretto Thibault

POTENTIAL MOLES

It's beautiful, sister,
what might have been between us
had we not been trained
to play dead and beg
for the love of a master.

Had we not been trained
to roll over
and bark, "I do,"
on cue.

I may have brought you
your slippers,
you might have
licked my face.

I wish we'd never gone to
obedience school.....

I wish we were still wolves.....
then it wouldn't be so hard
to get out of the doghouse.

· Angela Madeiras

Tommy laid there one long month.
Never smiled, or even sucked.
Fists grasped offered fingers,
Eyelids flickered when Mommy
Spoke.
I love you, live!

On Tuesday it was cold.

It was cold.
And they signed the papers
And we said it was right.

Anonymous

Grounds and Gardens

Green and groomed and manicured
the grounds around our schools
exactly like the minds within
shaped with modern tools
Planted with the finest seed
fertilized and watered
Pampered just like cattle being
fattened for the slaughter
Ah, but what would happen
if the grounds were left untended
Would wild flowers mingle then
with weeds and such and blended
amid the unkept landscape
would children then be free
to wander and to question
to savor and just be
but such is not the way of man
and ever must he mold
walls around his garden
like chains around his soul

Susan Phillips

The Blue Heron

The heron lingers around the periphery of the pond, where cat-tails abound, and lilies sprinkle the surface of the water. He is graceful, and dignified, quietly standing there in the shallows of the pond. He stands so very still, that if you didn't look specifically for him, you'd think he was an old weathered tree stump, rising above the surface of the pond, or a clump of dead reeds.

Gingerly, hesitantly, he places his feet forward, each in turn, and explores his way around the edges of the water, tenderly feeling with his toes, in the mud, gently memorizing his way along the bottom, by touch. Carefully, with each gliding step, he measures the outskirts of the pond. He is graceful and beautiful, in his own water ballet, choreographed by nature, in his instinct and pattern.

He pauses and dips his bill down into the water to scoop up a mouthful, and tilting his head upwards and back, lets the water slide down his throat. Once again he goes back to practicing his still, silent pose, like a statue of blue gray granite, fixed by the hand of God, there in the water. Dragonflies buzz by him and swallows swoop down to get a sip of water from the pond. Still, he remains motionless, waiting for a fish to swim by his feet. Sometimes he just nibbles along the stalks of the cat-tails and grasses, snacking on snails or a little pond greenery. If an unwary frog forgets and moves, giving away his hiding place, there's a swish, the blur of a blue, lightning fast bird, and the frog is lunch, swallowed in a flash, down inside the heron's long, lithe neck!

His rest time is a part of the serenity of his day. When he gets tired, he surreptitiously bends one long leg up under his body and leans into the wind, calculating and counterbalancing against it, as it breezes him. He is beautiful even in his repose, his head tucked neatly under his wing like an umbrella under a proper, blue suited business man's arm. There has not been a moment of imbalance, awkwardness, or uncertainty in his tranquil day. Not one feather is out of place. He is at peace with himself, confident, and perfectly comfortable with his place in the world, and sometimes... just sometimes...I wish I were him.

Mary C. Velarde

ESTHER'S SONG

I saw old lovers, dancing flames
Lively steps, golden bands
Hair the color of fleece
Pale skin, veiny hands

Eyes the mirror to the soul
Yet, if only I could see
They traded amorous glances
Meanings, foreign to me

So young I didn't understand
This bond, between woman and man
Loves many faces are conquered
Sweet tears shed upon the land

Now I gaze in the mirror
My reflection stares back
Old lovers holding hands
Esther smiles, and now I see

R. W. Anthony

A carefully considered sadness,
Lingers amid quiet defeat
So solemn, the bitter taste
On lips that never meet

To love a child, comfort a friend
These things our lips can do
Using soothing words, gentle kisses
On heavy hearts, but no! not on you

Only treasure that is buried
Will be easy to find, it's true
Compared to lips of yours to me
And lips of mine to you

Only songs we sing, words we say
Can be made to be near sweet
As that moment of ecstatic tenderness...
But no! our lips must never meet

Teresa M. Diederich

Wild Horse

Swiftly I whirled
around
pounding hooves
sounded like
thunder
Wild Horse
came charging
Free
like the wind
before a storm
dust clouds
followed her
she was
unstoppable, unpredictable
intensity filled eyes
uncorralled courage
unconquered determination
Her power
overtook my imagination
roped my attentions
flashback photographs
the beating
of my heart, breathless
abruptly
she stood
piercing through my eyes
into the abyss of my soul
muscular and awesome
captivated
her soft nose
kissed my left cheek
in a moment she vanished
a memory.

Susan Mable

THE RESCUE OF LISA

He tied a bit of twine around it and pulled it taut with his teeth. It was crude, but now nothing could accidentally shake the detonator loose from the plastic explosive.

Humbolt was the sort of man who spent his life dreaming of standing up for himself and his beliefs, but when given the opportunity to do so, sat meekly back down. Tonight, that would all change. Nothing was going to stop him from getting the one thing that he lived for: her.

He nervously checked his remote for the fifteenth time. It was still working. If he hadn't worn them out obsessing, the batteries were still new.

It tortured his soul that there would probably be members of the ship's crew in the communications room when he detonated his little bomb. But he'd gone over it again and again; there was no way to warn them without making them suspicious. If they knew why they were dying they would understand. He had to believe that.

He couldn't risk getting caught before he'd found her: his Lisa. She would smile when she saw him, she always did, no matter how unworthy he was. She would forgive him, even for kidnaping her. Lisa would understand that he did all of this for her.

He slipped his handiwork into the inside pocket of his jacket and smoothed the formal black fabric. It created a barely perceptible bulge on his chest. Perfect. He straightened his already immaculately straight black hair and daubed his face with rose water. The smell reminded him of her and refreshed not only his perspiring face, but also his confidence. Humbolt left his cabin with his shoulders back and with a determined gait.

Bringham was an arrogant man. He lived for the sole pleasure of possessing more than any of his peers. Though he felt it was unlikely that he actually had any peers. He was very careful with the things and the people he considered his. Everything which he owned was insured, and every employee was locked into an iron-clad contract with severe penalties for breaking it.

He looked at Lisa who was dressing for the Captain's ball. It would be difficult to write a contract for her since she wasn't even his employee. It would be so much easier if she were. But how would he word her job description? He kept her for her beauty and grace. She would be paid for having long straight brown hair and a smooth oval

face. But of course, her smile was the important part; it was subtle and secretive like a covert invitation. He would pay her overtime if she never stopped smiling. She complemented his other possessions perfectly, and he was determined to add her to his collection. At least, for this cruise, she didn't mind him flaunting her and insisting that she smile for everyone. The only payment she seemed to require, for now, was that he be nice to her and pretend to be understanding of her low-brow idealism. He preferred the exchange of money; the terms were clearer. But the pretense often proved amusing. She looked up at him from the bed where she was pulling short dainty blue boots on over her lace stockings. It was almost comical the way the many yards of silver lame were making this simple task nearly impossible. If he had her under contract, he could have ordered her to wear something more revealing.

"What are you smiling at, Bingham?"

"Oh, I'm just making plans, honey, I checked all the alarms and locks. The safe is locked, the jewelry cases are secure, and the painting cases are all tight. Shall I check the wines? We could check them out carefully before we go; you know the Captain will probably be serving some cheap domestic red like Mad Dog."

She stood up and put her arms around him. "Maybe I'd prefer Mad Dog to drinking something, knowing that for the price of one bottle of it, I could feed a family of four for a few months,"

He laughed. "You need to learn how to enjoy yourself, Lisa." He indicated the enormous blue diamond necklace she wore, "And I have noticed that you take some pleasure in wearing half my fortune around your beautiful neck."

She reached up and pulled his sharp thin face toward her, using his curly blonde hair like handles. "You are a rat! And it isn't my diamond, even if you do call it Lisa too!" She kissed him, then pushed him away. "Maybe I should make you wear your own necklace, then you could go to the ball alone"

"What? And let you stay all alone here, with the good wine?" He looked serious for a moment, knowing he had to make a payment. "But you do have a good point; perhaps we should drink water."

This seemed to make her happy. The terms were adequate,

Humbolt entered the communications room and went straight to the radio. How bold he felt as he casually slipped an arm around it as if to steady himself. He placed the bomb there with ease and brought his arm back into view. He did it! Just as he'd planned it: too quick to be stopped, too casual to be suspicious.

"Excuse me, sir," A white uniformed man took him by the arm and led him out of the room, "This area is off limits to passengers, sir, may I help you?"

"Yes," He said in a purposefully slurred voice. "I want to go home, right now!"

"I'm sorry sir, but I can't help you. We won't be making port again for two days. Why don't you go back to your cabin and relax? Do you need help finding your way?"

"No, thank you, Steward." He did a good job of looking unsteady.

The young man smiled "Sir," he said "I am not a steward, I am the captain." He couldn't have been over twenty-five.

Humbolt laughed "I'm sorry. Maybe I've had a bit too much to drink." He walked away and down two levels before he stopped. This was just about as far away as he could get and still be able to use his remote.

He took it out and looked at it. That nice polite young man was going to die. He lay down on his chest,

"For Lisa." He said. His hands were shaking as he keyed in a sequence of numbers on the remote.

The sound of metal walls being torn to pieces was almost as horrifying as the vibration. He heard a scream from somewhere above.

The captain? The hallway paintings, which had been bolted into the walls, exploded forward onto his back with bruising force. He was terrified. The floor beneath him was going to buckle and he would die without ever seeing his Lisa again.

But the floor finally stopped vibrating. He was alive. A picture frame had cut into his back; that was a small price to pay. He hadn't felt the second explosion, but it was far more carefully placed and a smaller bomb had been needed. It was unlikely that anyone had even been hurt by it. The evidence of the second bomb was obvious, though, every light and every electrical sound was gone, replaced by the sounds of many people rushing around in confusion.

Humbolt was not confused, he shook the paintings off his back and began running as fast as he could through the other passengers. He ran down, and around, through many corridors, past crying children, and little old ladies. He was glad he had mapped this route so carefully.

At Bringham's cabin door, he paused to break the lock. Then he let himself in. But Bringham was right behind him. Amazing! In a bombing, the first thought the materialistic bastard had was for his things.

"Stop! What the hell are you doing?" Bringham waved a little golden revolver in the air.

Humbolt reacted without thinking. He turned around and punched him in the face. The revolver discharged in the air and he heard the bullet ricochet twice. He hit him so hard, he felt something snap in his hand. Then he fell to his knees, overwhelmed for a moment by the searing hot pain. Bringham was perfectly still beneath him. Up! He had no time to waste worrying about his hand. He had to rescue his beautiful lady from this obscene materialism.

Most of Bringham's security systems were electrical and had already been disabled by the second bomb. The others were child's play for Humbolt to break.

When she finally saw him, Lisa did smile. His spirits leapt high as he carefully removed her adornments and held her close to his heart. He would never let her go again. She didn't say a word, but he could tell that she didn't reproach him. "You will never have to see that pig again." he said.

He lifted her over Bringham's inert form and they made their way to the life boats. But he became confused, every corridor was the same. The numbers on the cabin doors made no sense. He took the time to ask for directions from a surly teen-aged girl. She directed them into a big waste of time.

They eventually found themselves under the starlight on a middle deck. He could see all around him. This was good.

But, before Humbolt could decide which way to go, Bringham and eight big men in white uniforms began to advance on him from around the deck. All of them were brandishing firearms. They had been waiting for him! If he ran and jumped over the rail, he might be able to make it over-board, but Lisa might not make it. Which fate would be worse for her? Bringham? or the ocean? He looked at the smirking billionaire, then at Lisa. She smiled encouragingly at him. He smiled back and whispered "You will suffer no more of this indignity, my lady." Then he took her in a tight embrace, ran to the rail, and jumped.

Bringham and the crewmen watched as Humbolt impaled himself and the Mona Lisa on a scaffolding frame on the lower deck. The scaffolding was being used to decorate the ship for the carnival. There were many formally dressed people below screaming and pointing upward at Humbolt. Blood poured from his chest, down the metal post, onto the freshly painted pictures of brightly dressed children. Only death released his tender hold on the painting.

Lisa came around the corner, in her silver and blue cloud. She looked as calm as usual. But when she looked over the rail she blanched and turned away.

One of the white-clad men turned to Bringham and said "We found the captain, he is only injured. When you have collected yourself, please come to the infirmary to speak to him." Bringham nodded.

Another man looked down and said "Sir, this is a tragedy, surely that painting can never be repaired!"

"On the contrary, son, I had the good sense to listen to my insurers advice. I had several copies of that painting made, only a fool would travel with the original. So, you see, it isn't a tragedy after all."

Lisa looked startled, "That man is dead." she said.

"Yes. I knew him. He used to be in charge of security at the Louvre. He was very angry when they sold the Mona Lisa to me. He thought, no matter how badly his country needed the money, it would be a crime to sell it to a private owner. Now look who's talking about crime." He snorted derisively. "He was just a self-important security guard, anyway."

Lisa risked another look and smiled wistfully (so like La Gioconda). "How he must have loved her. He must have felt like a hero in the end." She took the Lisa diamond off and placed it around Bringham's neck. He looked confused.

"Go to the ball alone." she said. "I never want to see you again." Lisa walked away.

Tonya Roberts

I saved the kittens, but
not all--
Remember the night
the tyrant came back?
He made me do it;
put the blind one out
in the rain.

My love changed to
hate that night--
I remember the feeling
leaving my very soul.
He did not know;
how could he? Poor creature;
he was also blind.

Margaret Villani

After Espada's Words

When they wheeled you in, I found the Spanish in your hair
And in your voice were hummingbirds,

A thousand wings beating out the songs of mountains.

In the pale blue window light, the two polished stones you call eyes,
Pink folded flesh scanned pages.

Did your mother fan away the cockroaches with
Palm fronds or were Brooklyn trees all dead?

Somewhere beneath that Castro beard as fine as nut hair,
With breath as sweet as milk
You explained the taste of colonialism.
Your upturned, burning face cooled with tap water in a plastic cup.

In Brooklyn now do they whisper Espada
Or is the name scraped in the peeling lead paint
In a falling stone building somewhere on a
Crying street in Chelsea.
You announced Spanish like it was honey on your tongue.
It fell in my ears like candied violets,
Like a tree with red blossoms,
Like a hummingbird chewing at the fine twine
That binds it.

Steve Smith

Bad Children Are...

Gelal and Hebe sat confidently in the gengineer's office. Hebe held the infant on her lap. Gelal's impassive gaze rested on the infant. They were waiting for the results of the GRT(Genetic Rating Test), to see if their infant was over the passing percentage. Arcadia, the megacity where they lived, had an agreed seventy percent or higher. The gengineer sat indifferently in his chair, staring at the holodisplay of his computer. The test still wasn't done and the GRT was at seventy-five. Then seventy-three. Gelal and Hebe reread the holosigns that were on the walls.

DON'T POLLUTE THE GENE POOL.
ONLY THE FIT SURVIVE. THE UNFIT ARE DEVIVED.
LIFE IS CHANCE, THE ODDS GOOD OR BAD.
THE UNIVERSE IS COLD AND UNCARING.
VOID. LIFE. QUIETUS. VOID.

The computer finally spoke, Gelal and Hebe looked at each other, it had been too long.

"Offspring at sixty-six percent. Must be devived, is genetic threat."

"You do have little Lilit, she rated a seventy-five if I remember right," the gengineer said, looking at the infant.

"You're right," Hebe said, an appraising look on her face as she now lightly touched the infant.

"He should have at least scored seventy-five like Lilit," Gelal said, the same look as Hebe on his face.

"He should have been better than Lilit, our next child will be," Hebe said.

Now the gengineer looked at the infant.

"I'll record the devival. How will you do it?"

"We don't know yet," Gelal said, touching the infant where Hebe had. "I trust you'll decide right," he said to Hebe.

As the door opened, little Lilit thought off the holovision, and ran to it. They had returned. Gelal was carrying a small polyplas bag with something in it. "He didn't make it," Lilit said, frowning, then smiling. "Let me see him, let me see him!"

Gelal and Hebe looked at her. She had curved horns, black as her father's. Her mother's platinum-blond hair. Her father's bright orange eyes. She made up for the failure of their second child.

"Are you sure you can hold him?" Gelal asked, holding out the object to Lilit, the infant tightly wrapped in polyplas.

"I big enough. I can carry him. I really can!" Lilit cried, tugging at the polyplas wrapped infant.

"Alright," Hebe said, and Lilit carried, if a little awkwardly, the infant's body away.

"Oh, Lilit," Hebe said.

Lilit stopped, almost losing her balance, and turned. "Get out the roasting pan." Lilit moved faster toward the kitchen.

David Monette

Sudden silence, rings across the land,
Friend and foe join hand in hand.
The bitter tears soon pass by,
And the echoes of pain will soon die.

To see through those twilight eyes,
Upon the mourner's heaping sighs.
You are free, though closed in our minds,
Escape to the heavens upon this sad lullaby.

Mary Savage

I awoke one green and gold morning
with life jangling at the window.
The curtain lace billowed in a warm breeze
and I smiled--
You were lying beside me
and a child danced
'round your lips.

Debra Johnson

THE TEA PARTY

Serpents feed venom sweet
Baby on baby's breast
Suckle the milk of hate
Plastic cups set for guests

Nurtured on mother's lies
The false face hides, What
The false heart knows
Jacks aligned in a row

Too late, it leads nowhere
Yesterday does not exist
Dreams are cast aside
Forgotten in the hazy mist

The game of life you played
Lines are broken, promises fade
White canopied bed is made

The Tea Party starts at noon....

R.W. Anthony

GREY DAWN

Grey is my color.
See how brightly it shines?
Dawn gives no reprieve
from endless grey.
Where did the sun rise?
What corner of this Godforsaken
Earth could be the east?
I cannot tell grey
from endless grey.

Grey is my color.
It glitters in my eyes,
along with all the promises
that have mutated into lies.

Grey.
Can you see me
through this endless day?
When will you ever listen
to what my words **SAY?**
They speak of twisted silences
in the eye of a hurricane!

Do not open your mouth
to let the truth spill out!
Truth is too profane.
Don't speak to me
unless your eyes
also glitter in the grey.

Tonya Roberts

Catharine I Was, Catharine I Am

I was only eight years old the first time it happened. My parents and I were traveling through New Hampshire. My two parents were sitting comfortably in front of me, while I sat nestled in the comfy, leather upholstered back seat of our Mercedes-Benz luxury sedan.

Being quite small then, I had to push myself up to allow my eyes a glimpse of the passing countryside. As we traveled, we passed several farming fields occupied with feeding cows and tractors busy cultivating crops. We lived in New York City at the time and a trip to the country allowed us to take in such sights that our penthouse apartment definitely didn't offer us from our balcony's view.

That hot, sunny afternoon we were endlessly searching for American antiquities. My mother had several hobbies, all of which had their time to be enjoyed and endured. I say endured, because my father and I were always dragged along for her never-ending expeditions to weed out and discover whichever objects she desired at that particular moment.

Nearly two hours had passed and I grew tired and impatient. My head lay tilted on the window ledge, my head being tiny enough to use it as a pillow. Eventually, I fell asleep. I probably would have remained in that state of escape for hours, but my dozing was interrupted by my mother's shrill scream of excitement. She had spotted a sign that read "Red Barn Antiques, 1 mile." This sent her tongue flapping to my father about how glad she was that we finally had found her main destination of the day. She bantered on and on, describing in great detail how interesting it would be to show all the ladies from the club her new found treasures at their next luncheon-tea. My dad agreed, although I could sense, even at that young age, a hesitancy in his voice. Through the years my father put up with an awful lot of my mother's moods and tantrums.

As we took our turn into an old dirt driveway, a rather large, red barn came fully into view. We parked while my mother wasted no time in removing her seat belt. My father and I moved more slowly. Eventually, hand in hand we approached the wide open door in front of the barn. Even though I was very young, I found the expanse of the door inviting and friendly. I felt unusually drawn to the cool shade that it allowed and anticipated going inside.

At my first look around I didn't feel anything but natural

curiosity as to what small goodies I might uncover. But before I could even make my way to search, my mother called both my Dad and me over to where she stood. She looked down on me and courtly instructed me to keep my hands off everything, as these objects were easily broken. With that, she quickly turned to my father with her never-ending bantering about a mirror she'd found. It was absolutely gorgeous with a gold-flowered frame. She explained she just had to have it for the empty space above the fireplace in the living room. Of course she neglected to mention that that very same space became empty several times a year. Then it was quietly filled again with a possession that suited my mother's present obsession.

I listened to this for a minute or two and quickly became bored. Not heeding my mother's orders, I began to scan the room for something to look at for amusement. As my eyes scanned the room with its high ceiling and dark wooden pillars, I began to feel strangely comfortable, almost at home. At the time, I did not feel this was as important as I do now.

Quickly my eyes fixated on a small, wooden infant's crib. Not the crib of a human infant, but that intended for a pretend baby doll. Being the age of eight, this was a prize find for me. I made haste over to the crib and knelt down to touch it, and to my pleasant surprise I found a very old baby doll, nestled inside a miniature blanket.

I brushed the baby's porcelain cheek lightly with the fingertips of my right hand. At that instant, an overpowering smell of horses, hay and manure came to my nostrils. I had no way of explaining this strange scent as the sounds of horses hooves and neighing came to my ears. It was so loud, I looked around me in earnest to see the animals, but there were none to be seen.

Suddenly, I felt a strange pull that demanded I pick up the doll. I did so, and carefully and naturally held her close to my chest. Just then a tremendous wind blew open the door at the far end of the barn. Outside a terrible storm raged and the sky was dark gray with luminous clouds. The wind grew stronger as I got to my feet, my mind racing with confusion and frightening thoughts. I clutched the doll to me as I began to stumble backwards. My struggle worsened when my eyes began to squint to keep out the force, along with the bits of sand and debris that were planting themselves in my eyes and mouth. I threw up my left arm to help shield my face as I began to panic.

Then I heard my mother's voice. She was screaming my name. Once. Then a second time louder, and then finally a third time. She screamed in such earnest that I turned around with such a nervous, frightened jolt, that I dropped the doll. And instantaneously, the wind,

the debris, the noise, the utter confusion, and the screaming stopped.

As I stood motionless, all I could do was stare into my mother's stern, angry green eyes. At that moment, more than any other in my life, I felt completely trapped and alone.

"Catherine!" She yelled at me. "What did I tell you about touching anything?"

My father quickly came to my defense, but my mother wouldn't hear of it. She quickly cut him off and turned to the old saleswoman with a tidal wave of apologies trying to excuse, as she put it, her "disobedient daughter." But the old woman was warm and sweet. She smiled and said,

"The doll is not broken or hurt in any way. There's really been no harm done. And besides, the doll looks so much like your sweet little girl, with its wisp of red hair and freckles."

That was when I finally looked down at the doll. The saleswoman was correct, she hadn't suffered the fall as my mother had so quickly assumed. She just lay as perfectly still and silent as when I'd found her.

"Come on, Merrile," my dad pleaded to my mother. "Let Catherine have the doll. She surely didn't mean to drop it, and she so likes it." After several minutes of this, my mother agreed, reluctantly. My father then approached me. He knelt down before me and handed me the fallen doll. I smiled widely at him, and he, in turn, winked at me with his loving, chestnut eyes.

And with that, the traumatic experience concluded. My parents paid for the purchases and we were again on our way. As we drove away from the barn, I turned and strained to watch it until it grew smaller and I could see it no longer. We never did find anymore antiques that sunny day in August. Those of which pleased my mother anyway.

It wasn't until late that evening in the country inn, that my mother mentioned the incident again. While tucking me into bed, she asked me why it took me so long to answer to her calling my name that afternoon? My only response was a weak,

"I don't know, mommy."

She smirked, but to my pleasure, she accepted this with no further questioning.

With that she bid me good night.

As my eyes followed my mother's shape reach the door, I allowed my gaze to concentrate on a trail of light seeping in by the door being left slightly ajar. After staring at this for several minutes, my mind started reeling and I struggled to recall the day's events. My mind was

fatigued and begged for sleep, but I forced myself to concentrate, to remember every detail. I recalled the smell of the horses, the precious doll in my arms, the tremendous wind, the debris, my mother's voice. Perhaps something was missing or I just hadn't noticed something.

Just then I sat bolt upright in the bed, my face sprinkled with nervous sweat. My heart pounding loudly in my ears. The most important detail. As quickly as I'd forgotten it, it came back to me. When I was being pushed backwards by the wind, my legs weren't enveloped by light green trousers. They were shrouded by a country-style dress with a flowered pattern and lace surrounding the hem. My tiny feet possessed black lace up boots instead of pink sneakers. This was my evidence. I had been somewhere else for half a minute.

Pamela D. Alton

HAVE YOU HEARD

Said Clara to young Constance
'bout Miss Mary Witherspoon,
"She's really quite a trollop.
Why, it almost makes me swoon."

Young Constance did concur then,
"Why, the way she tilts that hat,
it's an open invitation
and can you imagine that,

she's been known to entertain;
as many gents as three!"
Said Clara, as she clutched her fan,
"Well it's no surprise to me.

Though I wonder what it is
that the men find so appealing?
It surely couldn't be the fact
that her clothes are too revealing,

for the girl is only skin and bone
with hair that awful shade of red
and her skin is such a pasty white
she looks as if she's almost dead. "

Then in walked Mary Witherspoon
and Clara could be heard to say,
"come sit with us, you dear sweet child
and help us pass the time of day."

Said Constance, "have you heard the talk
about that new girl, Charlotte?
I hardly could believe my ears.
Why, she's nothing but a harlot! "

Susan Phillips

GOING HOME

Today begins the soldiers' race

To prove remains of war

by marching proudly w/ glad grace

One-legged hop to keep the pace

And hopping ever more

Faces smoothed w/ proud disgrace

They'll always be another place

And in the end they prove what for

by marching proudly w/ glad grace

Killing as they, w/ such distaste

is quite an awful chore

Their faces smoothed w/ proud disgrace

In the end, all a waste?

or can they make it something more

by marching proudly w/ glad grace

A wife is groomed w/ pretty lace

And next to her a whore

Their faces smoothed w/ proud disgrace

and in the end we ask what for

Gennavieve Rachel Veronica

WHITE FLIGHT

Ominous, the cirrus clouds unseen
Blot the horizon from distant shores
Unsuspecting, sky deathly silent
Cumulus clouds find higher ground
Crows caw, a pathetic sound
Sea gulls flee virgin ground
Capricorn snared in the mire
Twelfth house a funeral pyre
Pilgrims rush to the surging sea
Engulfed in a blind rage
Planting seeds on barren land
Flight of the dove has begun.....

R. W. Anthony

I never noticed
How the crickets laugh
And murmur
And chatter
About the thoughts
We tell one another
How they sing
Of our secrets
Tell others our
Privacies
Except for the crickets
Who would laugh
At our foolishness
And so quietly
To save our
Faces

Teresa M. Diederich

SNAPSHOT

Her chair is rhythmically creaking.
She stares out the window
with eyes that don't see
A soft gloominess
descends upon the room.
Without looking at the clock,
I know that it is early evening.
He'll be coming.
I ache to touch her,
console her...protect her.
Instead, I shrink into a corner;
make myself small.
Perhaps he won't see.

Susan Phillips

from Brief Adventures of a Dipsomaniac

The sign on the door said, "J. Thompson, Exterminator." Martin stepped up to it and rapped the big brass knocker nervously. He stepped back a bit and scratched his neck.

A tall woman with long limbs answered the door. She smiled, revealing a long line of sharp teeth flecked with bits of lunch. "What can I do for you?"

"I need to talk to the exterminator," said Martin, still scratching. His voice was a high-pitched whine.

"That would be me," the woman said, her smile widening. "Come on in."

"You're J. Thompson?" Martin stepped quickly into the office. The first thing he noticed was a large rotweiler lying in a corner of the room beneath a gauzy white blanket. It appeared to be sleeping quite soundly.

The exterminator sat down behind an enormous black desk. "Call me Judy," she said, brushing a cobweb from her sleeve.

Martin rubbed his hands together. "I may as well come to the point," he said. "I've got bugs. I've got 'em bad. I don't know what kind they are or where they're coming from, but I've got to do something about them." He began to pace up and down the room, but softly, so as not to wake the dog.

"These bugs, what do they look like?" Judy asked.

Martin rubbed his hands over his eyes. "I dunno, I can't see 'em," he whined. "They must be really tiny. They're all over me, too. And they bite. They're drinking my blood! You've got to help me!"

The exterminator sat quietly for a moment, observing her new client. Martin continued to pace the room carefully, stopping on occasion for brief moments, rubbing his hands together. It seemed to her that he would begin climbing up the wall at any time.

"I know what your problem is," she said finally. "I know just what to do about it, too." She rose. From behind the desk she pulled out a large metal cylinder with a hose and spray nozzle attached. She approached Martin, who stared at her with round, protruding eyes.

"This is just what you need," said the exterminator, pointing the spray nozzle at him. A stream of yellow powder shot from the cylinder directly into Martin's face. He fell to the floor, unable to speak. His arms and legs flailed about in violent spasms. The last thing he saw was the teeth of the exterminator, smiling as she bent over him.

Angela Madeiras

MONODY FOR AN UNKNOWN

The quest book was as empty as a junkie's eyes I scrawled my identity onto the first white page - so white it assaulted my eyes

In the parlor were several chairs standing in vertical need each other - I methodically unfolded one

It creaked with age

My demeanor was vague as the pleat of my jeans, and consistent with the state funded atmosphere in which I sat

The parlor was adorned with...nothing at all - not a flower or flame - the deceased had forgotten to furnish his name, but a myrric aroma donated itself through a door that was slightly ajar - then was gone with a bearer who transferred some chairs to a well-to-do wake in the front

My thoughts were so distant and yet so immersed in the

genuine probability of my own cirrhotic fate - mummified in the cumbersome wrappings of thick, torpid ritual - my soul seething somewhere in the amazingly dry Hades of alcoholic reserve

A haunting silence hung in the room - as hush as the man in the box - so quiet I could hear a tear drop

When all at once, from the frock of ordainment flowed sounds of assurance and mercy and faith - in He whom I could not see - Whom had taken he whom I did not know

I directed my double-vision to the pious figure who

sermonized, "He's gone across Stix and way from all Hell leaving all else and us in betwixt!"

Poor consolation for a struggling drifter so grieving the loss of a transient stranger - I buried my head in my hands

The man of the cloth cut his eulogy short, "Would you care to express some thoughts of your own?" I recoiled in my seat

It creaked with age

He went on, "Would you care to view the departed?" I steadies myself, as this would be my first acquaintance and my final adieu - and en route to the casket I envied the stranger as one of my own who'd found peace With the nebulous stare of a vision impaired I phlegmatically viewed the oblivious pearl in the left-over shell of a fleeting funereal oyster With that I knelt down in surrender to nausea - my brain embalmed in a fifth of cheap death, and braving delusions of tubular neons alighting the labels of bottom shelf beers

The clergyman cried, "Nurture your pain - Caress your bereavement!"

I then performed fellatio on the neck of a tin flask right right there in front of God and the Angels The preacher closed the casket and split, leaving his aura behind

Engrossed in the rapture of rum, and teetering over the catch
penny casket - I cracked the lid and surreptitiously chucked in a wet
book of matches, a filterless hopper, and the last belt in the flask
embossed on the bottom with, "Good To The Last Drop"

The service concluded and the deceased was now prepared for an
affluent journey into Egyptian Glory

Kevin Teixeira

THE OLDER WOMAN

We walked over slick fishy wood to the end
where only the railing stopped me
stopped us
from going all the way.

She held my hand, gently holding me back.

We sat close to the sea under a pumpkin moon.
As we talked, I feared only I would be left behind
in the wet sand.

I could hear the roar, feel the power under the impressions
our bodies made but could see only black
when I looked towards the source.

We sat talking until the empty cans rolled away and
the salty wind had smoked all our cigarettes for us.

Later in the room, it was like before
For the last time.

She closed the door and walked away from me down that
wind swept ocean front street.

I sat in the cold grey light, wind buffeting the car,
watching her disappear.

Wondering how she could not even look back.

ANONYMOUS

30

While tracking white tails through endless cart roads
Was it the rustling of tree limbs amidst the winds of winter
Or your breath whispering to me
remember when

We wrestled to the ground
caught the biggest fish
flushed out a single pheasant
hours upon miles
tired muscles
victory and defeats
sliding into first base
a puck against our blades

Now and then through each season it happens
The bonding memories
Brothers
Amidst the winds of winter

Sheryl Moretto Thibault

THOUGHTS,
SPILLING OUT,
A MENTAL CALAMITY
PRESSED AND FUSED
OVER TIME--
WRETCHED AND TWISTED,
COLOUR,
SWIRLING BEFORE MY EYES,
DANCING
LIKE FIRE ESCAPING THE SPARK,
IMAGES,
ROOTED IN MY MIND
GROWING AND PLANTING,
THE WEEDS OF TIME.

Mary Savage

SHADOWS AND DARKNESS

Oh come
Oh struggling heart
Be my friend today

I need your tender love
Please stand with me, I pray

When darkness
Swallows up all light

When shadows hover round
I cannot find a friendly thought

I simply cower down
Oh Christ

Oh Christ within me
It's you I'm looking for

I'm longing once again to touch
Your peace, so I endure

Irene Pervier

Love

is it a word
or a feeling
or an act of being?

Is it a thought
or an emotion
or a snowflake
upon the wind
melted and consumed
by the passion
of the sun?

Is it a stirring
in the soul
of a seed
there all along,
coming up above
the ground
into the warmth
of the sun?

Is it an opening
into a very
ancient understanding
of the heart
of God?

M. C. Velarde

**more from:
Brief Adventures of a Dipsomaniac**

The bartender set the hot whiskey down in front of Martin, and fixed him with flinty eyes. "This is the last one," he said, leaning on each syllable as if it were unbreakable.

"Yeah, okay," Martin slurred, reaching for the glass. He stared for a moment at the warm brown liquor, and the three cloves suspended in it. They looked strange, alien, like prehistoric insects trapped in amber. "Hey, that's a pretty good line," he thought, "I oughta write that down." He pulled toward him a damp cocktail napkin that had been sitting on the bar all night, and fished through his pockets for a pen. All he could find was a stiff, ancient Kleenex and a pack of Marlboros. He blew his nose, lit a cigarette, and then tried to set fire to the cocktail napkin with the match.

"Cut off," he thought. "Means I'll have to go home soon. Suzanne will be in bed when I get there, pretending to be asleep." Through the midst of his numbness came a feeling of abandonment.

It was at this moment that the rabbit walked into the bar. She sat down on the stool beside Martin and ordered a Pink Lady in a honeyed voice. Martin stared at her rich brown fur. It looked to him to be softer than his wife's eiderdown pillow.

"What are you doing here all alone?" the rabbit asked, sipping her drink through a straw.

"I'm getting drunk," replied Martin with what he thought to be great charm. He smiled, his teeth yellow and cracked like old porcelain. "What about yourself?"

The rabbit smoothed her red miniskirt and giggled. "Oh, I saw you through the window," she said. "I said to myself, 'What a shame! Such a handsome man, drinking all alone! So I thought I'd come in and keep you company. Can I buy you a drink?'" She twirled her whiskers absently.

"Oh, yes please," said Martin, rubbing his reddened eyes. "Hot whiskey, please." He hardly dared to believe his luck.

The rabbit held up a bangled paw and called to the bartender, who tossed a disgusted look at Martin. "He's cut off," he growled.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, turning to Martin. Her eyes were full of pity. "I'm so sorry! That's awful. A crime! How could they cut you off?" Her little pink nose twitched with emotion.

"I dunno," said Martin. "The bastard's got something against me, I dunno what. So I puked on the bar in here once before, so what?" A storm cloud crossed his pockmarked face. "Maybe I oughta teach him a lesson!" He rose unsteadily, gripping the bar with

both hands. Two crimson stains spread over his cheeks.

The rabbit jumped up in alarm and seized his shoulders. "No, no! There's no need for that, now. You don't have to prove that you're strong." Martin sank back down onto his stool, and she smiled. "There now. There now. Look here." She unbuttoned her blouse, revealing a pair of firm breasts. She reached out for him and drew him toward her. "I wish these were full of hot whiskey for you," she whispered. He felt her soft fur tickle his nose.

Suddenly, the lights dimmed. "Closing time!" the bartender shouted. "Drink up, everyone!"

"I--I gotta go home," Martin muttered. "I have a wife. I gotta go." He slid out of the rabbit's embrace and pulled his old coat around him. His heart thumped in his throat as he headed for the big oak door, and the snow that fell on the other side of it.

Angela Madeiras

For Agnes

The leaves are turning now,
the last she'll ever see.
My heart is full of pain.
She's as beautiful to me
as the leaves before they fall,
their color only deepened
by the early autumn rain

Susan Phillips

It happened before I even knew;
I saw teeth on the floor, and
I was there too--stunned.

The taste of blood? Not mine.
I'm not angry. Ah, but yes
it's true.

I'm thankful the glass did not
break
when my head hit the
bookcase doors.

You looked so large towering
over me,
and later--in your hospital bed--
you looked so small.
I remember thinking to
myself, you shrunk.

I'm sorry.
I forgive you.

Margaret Villani

When in perfect straightness I followed your spine.
A brief time where I heard roots pushing and the slow split of dark soil,
You read the air with rolled back eyes.
A million folds as dark as plums,
A piece of brittle grass lost on my tongue.
Somehow the world was nothing but cool green silk,
The sky as flat and white as paint,
And two heavy pods filled with a thousand seeds.
You filled my ears with the scrape of branches,
With the sound of fruit on fruit,
And in that sun stained morning--
With the small tip of a pale pink finger--
You scratched your name in the dry white salt,
On the warm full flesh that I call me.

Steve Smith

The flow of a rhythm guitar
the low tones of the bass
the fast beat of a drum in sync with our hearts
all is needed is the smooth tones of a poetic song

To the fallen heroes of the game we salute what you gave us
We strive to let you be heard
everybody hears your cries to live on
a cold field burning in early February
shots fired in New York
What you gave us is special
you will always be in our hearts and souls of our desire rock and roll
music

Bradley M. Hale

Wasted Time

I remember the first time I saw hair on his legs. I thought I was going to die from the shock. We were in Maine, where we went every summer. It was a hot day in mid-July. We stood on the rock surrounded by dark green water on every side. What we would do was when the tide was just beginning to come in, we would climb along the smaller rocks, through the waist high water to the larger rock. There we would wait until the tide was high enough for us to embark on our tortured swim to shore. That was one thing that Rick and I actually agreed on, the swim to shore was definitely torture.

When we got to the rock on that particularly warm day, we could hardly wait for the tide to reach its highest point. The cool salty mist spraying from the ocean with each unexpected burst of summery air was hardly enough to refresh our sweaty bodies. I was thirteen, turning fourteen, just after this summer ended. My brother, Rick, was twelve, just turned before this summer began. Our relationship was anything but steady. It could go from venomous rage and hate to best buddies within the same twenty-four hour period.

We were engaging in our usual past-time while waiting for the tide to grant our request, acting as foolishly as possible. I always have thought that it was such a release, Rick always thought it was just acting stupid. We pranced, bounced and skipped from rock to rock. I, being graceful and charming, would be certain every leap was precise. Rick, being clumsy and inflexible, looked like a chicken trying to fly. The smile on my face was almost embarrassing but there was nothing I could do about it. I knew Rick was having fun too, it's just, being a studly young lad and all, he had to watch the amount of emotion that actually came through. Watching him follow my lead, my mind began to race as quickly as my heart.

"Hey Rick, skip now," I shouted. I watched as his knees wobbled and his arms flailed in every direction. That stupid grin and his awkward attempts made him look absolutely ridiculous and I loved it. It made me think of how much he was willing to do for me.

"Sachet now," I shouted and he attempted the graceful dance move with a look of complete anguish on his face. His least favorite move, but I absolutely loved it. It made me feel so good to see him having so much fun with me, and it felt even better to be having so much fun with him.

As we began the stationary aerobic movements, I thought back to the times when my mood determined his safety. "Alright, now kick your legs and move your arms at once," I said and curled over to prevent peeing my pants. He looked like an ostrich, I swear. I remembered the times when I would hurt him so badly that he couldn't even go to school. My mother was afraid they would think he was an abused child. Well, you know, abused by them. She also used to say that all he really wanted was to be my friend. This I never bought. Why would a boy act so annoying and obnoxious if he wanted to be my friend. My mother claimed it was because he was a little boy. I claimed all he needed was a few more punches, kicks and scratches and that might do the trick.

Now, as I watched him attempting my every demand, I wished I hadn't been so mean to him yesterday, as a matter of fact. He was really a good kid. I really thought so, today. As his long rail-like legs

kicked in sync with mine, I looked down in horror. Oh my goodness, he must be in puberty, I cringed as I noticed the light brown hair growing from his legs. That is so gross, my own brother in puberty. I stopped bouncing, adjusted my bathing suit and sat down quickly. Relieved to have stopped, he sat down beside me.

"Maybe we should swim now, I feel hot enough," he gasped in between long pauses for air. I wanted to tell him then that I was sorry for all the awful things I had done and that I still did. I wanted to tell him that I always wanted it to be like it was right now. Best buddies hanging out, doing stupid things like dancing on rocks in the middle of the ocean. I really wanted him to know that I did love him, that I was really happy he was my brother. I opened my mouth but all that came out was, "no." The sudden look on his face made me realize he was nervous because he thought that I was angry. "No, I'm just not ready yet, OK? I really don't think the tide is high enough yet. Lets run around some more," I said quickly.

"Yeah, but I feel kinda dumb doing kicks out here on this rock, though. Do you think I look stupid? What if somebody sees me," he asked.

"Rick, who cares. Its just me and I don't care. Who else is going to see you, the old woman who lives in Connie's old house?" I asked. Although it was not the answer I wanted to give, although I did not say, "No Rick, you don't look stupid and I love you to do this with me, actually I just love you always," I said something positive and that was the important thing, right? "Come on, lets cartwheel," I said, as I did my beautiful straight legged, strong armed cartwheel. Rick followed with his bent leg, body flailing rendition of the flowing gymnastic essential.

"I'm really glad you're not afraid to act stupid with me." The sentence got to my lips but it never fell into the open air, never became real.

The tide was high and there was no more time for fun. It was time for the tortured swim. Somehow, today I thought it would be easier. The torture of today, I thought, had nothing to do with the freezing water or the long swim. The fact that every time you dive into this ocean you will always come up gasping, no matter how prepared you thought you were, had nothing to do with the torture I was feeling. The way we always swam so hard and fast, not only because our skin felt like it was burning, but also because of the subconscious fear of the crabs, seaweed, and of course that really large shark that had been known to come around every now and again, took on a totally different meaning for me today. I wanted to stop this minute and hold on to it just a little while longer. I wanted to give him a big hug and tell him that

it meant a lot to have a little brother like him. But that was too scary. It would be surrendering too much.

First Rick, then I, dove head first into the icy coldness and, as always, came up gasping because the ocean had stolen our hearts for that brief moment.

Kim Friberg

THE MOLE

Fossorial gem

Digging, burrowing

By which to make the gain

And with pain of squint

Furrowing, not seeing your way

Nor do you care,

Underground like Dostoevsky's Notes

You scratch and scrape that passionate way

Confessional, like writers do

Who know no more, no less than you.

For with brutal self-contained, self-conceit, they

Trench and tear their own tormented souls.

With bristling scorn, like the iconoclast

Who rides the ditch of congenital and blemished spot

Of tradition, beliefs, and cherished feats.

Of strengths, they've none and with you

Very small eyes while grooving that written word

Against the grain of that storied furrowing

That furrowing, that endless, endless furrowing

You dig, they dig, you both dig that ditch

Dig that ditch,
Dig
That
Ditch
Down,
Down
Into that written abyss,
The sentence
The soliloquy,
The syntax sack till at last, lifting, insectivorously
That literary pleasing and eating, with dirt, some treasure-trove.
Terra incognita? Oh, my minuscule mole, don't be afraid
To venture like Fyodor's nameless narrator
Into the hole of the paradox.
You and those writers of the "radical frankness"
Can live in the underground as of skin and fur
Conducive to the antihero.
Come with me, mole, come with me, mole,
Confess with me; I, We
Can parcel out, with digs, our own
Beliefs, our doubts, our truths, and half-truths,
Individualisms,
Let's go, mole, my friend
Show me with your dig
I'll show with pen.

David St. Armand

Find a way, anyway--and you will know
what keeps you here.
Lose today, so you may--forget and run
from all you fear.
Hide away, will you stray--apart from
this that brings you down.
Stay and play, so to say--I'll do it
different next time 'round.

Mary Savage

WORDS

Marvelous instruments expressing thought
From babbling babies to the eloquently taught
Conveying emotion or diplomacy and tact
Exciting ideas or the matter-of-fact

Wisdom from the prophet that we may know it
Tools to the statesman, life to the poet
The world to the reader, pride of the author
Hope for the ill, doubt for the scoffer

Generations represented from first to last
The golden link to ages past
Ancient beliefs are ours to enjoy
Ingenious inventions forever employ

Instructions to build, directions to take
Harshness to scold, guidance to make
Vulgarity for the ignorant, precision to explain
A curse or a blessing, pleasure or pain

Wars: begun and ended with these mighty tools
Yet the battles between them are caused by fools
Who unwilling to speak and listen with care
Kill and destroy, not help or share

A man's mighty deeds reduced to breath
Yet amplified greatly even after his death
And those who hear know a life once thrived
And words alone keep his essence alive

When carefully chosen they'll serve you well
They'll inform and impress and accurately tell
They'll create a picture that's vivid and true
And at the same time...paint a portrait of you

by Carl Tikka



